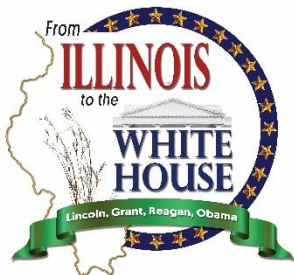


Design a first lady



There is no training manual for First Ladies. You get the job because the man you married becomes President.

--Hillary Clinton

In order to be President of the United States there are various requirements that must be met. A candidate must:

1. be a natural born citizen of the United States
2. be at least 35 years of age
3. have lived in the U.S. for at least 14 years

In contrast, there are no official requirements of a First Lady. There are no constitutional guidelines, there is no template, there is no agreed upon criteria for those wanting to rate an existing or potential First Lady.

Former First Ladies have come from entirely different backgrounds – some were highly educated, while others had no formal education; some had been reared in wealth, others came from very modest means. Many expressed interests in the arts and boasted literary accomplishments. Numerous First Ladies proved to be very astute politically; others focused their White House days on their families and domestic issues.

Although the role of First Lady is full of opportunities to see and be seen, most First Ladies married to the President find their power is based on a wedding band and not the electorate; the First Lady's power is limited by her relationship to the President, often functioning as his eyes and ears. She has influence, but no legal authority. Even though she is neither elected nor appointed to her Lady be on call twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year. She receives no salary or other monetary compensations for her work.

She has to be willing to accept that everything she says, everything she wears, every action she takes will be closely monitored, reported, and commented on by the media. Everything she does in her role as First Lady will be criticized and praised. Her life before her time in the White House will be closely scrutinized and it will be necessary for her to build a relationship with the American public that is based primarily on how the media portrays her.

More than 40 women have attained the position of First Lady and each has defined the job to her own personality, talents, interests and family responsibilities. Following their term in the White House, Ladies have gone on to become authors, artists, and advocates.

Procedure:

In small groups, students should develop a "job description" for First Lady of the Land based on students' expected role of First Lady, as well as accounts on life in the White House by former First Ladies. Include such vocabulary as job duties, tasks, function, role, and benefits.

Suggested Criteria Template:

The following four categories may help students organize their job description criteria:

- Duties and Responsibilities
- Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities
- Credentials and Experience
- Special Requirements

Include traditional roles as well as any creative non-traditional roles deemed important to students.

Each group should then conduct an interview with one student from the group selected to act as the potential First Lady, the other group members act as interviewers. The interviewers should use the four categories listed above to develop interview questions; the candidate's replies should include the recommended qualifications composed by the group. Each group should develop a written resume for their named "candidate". Copies of these resumes should be passed out to all class members for review and discussion.

Extension: One student from each group is selected to form a panel of First Lady candidates. Acting as media representatives, the rest of the class questions the panelists as to their specific qualifications for First Lady. The teacher should act as the moderator. The "media" should refer to each candidate's resume (referred to in activity above) for personal information. Each candidate should use the job description criteria developed by his/her group in response to interview questions. Following this panel discussion, a vote should be taken by the class as to the most qualified First Lady candidate.

Needed:

First Lady of America

Must be able to:

- Charm foreign dignitaries
- Oversee maintenance of large home
- Entertain on a moment's notice
- Please all the people, all the time!

Send resume to citizens of the
United States of America
Sorry, no job description
available

Grade Level: 6-12

Materials:

Books

Internet sites for research on First Ladies

Objectives:

As a result of this activity, students will:

- Understand that there are no legal requirements to become or to carry out the duties of First Lady of America
- Understand that each First Lady represents a different background and must fill the role of First Lady according to her own interests and capabilities
- Personally design official duties for First Lady based on their research, personal opinions and class discussion

Illinois Learning Standards:

English/Language Arts

CCR Reading: Key Ideas and Details: 2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

CCR Writing: Text Types and Purposes. 3. Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

CCR Writing: Production and Distribution of Writing. 4. Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCR Writing: Research to Build and Present Knowledge: 9. Draw evidence from literary or information texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCR Speaking and Listening: Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas: 4. Present information, findings, and supportive evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organizations, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCR: Language: Conventions of Standard English: 1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

CCR Language: Vocabulary Acquisition and Use: 6. Acquire and use accurately a range of general academic and domain-specific words and phrases sufficient for reading, writing, speaking, and listening at the college and career readiness level; demonstrated independence in gathering vocabulary knowledge when considering a word or phrase important to comprehension or expression.

Social Science

SS.IS.2.6-8: Ask essential and focusing questions that will lead to independent research.

SS.IS.2.9-12: Explain how supporting questions contribute to an inquiry.

SS.IS.6.6-8: Construct explanations using reasoning, correct sequence, examples and details, while acknowledging their strengths and weaknesses.

SS.IS.6.9-12: Construct and evaluate explanations and arguments using multiple sources and relevant, verified information.

SS.IS.7.9-12: Articulate explanations and arguments to a targeted audience in diverse settings.

SS.CV.1.6-8: Describe the roles of political civil and economic organizations in shaping people's lives.

SS.CV.1.9-12: Distinguish the rights, roles, powers, and responsibilities of individuals and institutions in the political system.

SS.CV.5.9-12: Analyze the impact of personal interest and diverse perspectives on the application of civic dispositions.

SS.CV.3.6-8: Compare the means by which individuals and groups change societies, promote the common good, and protect rights.

SS.H.2.6-8: Analyze multiple factors that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras. United States and other nations.

SS.H.3.9-12: Evaluate the methods used by people and institutions to promote change.

SS.H.7.9-12: Identify the role of individuals, groups, and institutions in people's struggle for safety, freedom, equality and justice